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THE TREASURE OF THIS WORLD AND THE HEREAFTER **By Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad**

A Book which We have revealed unto you, in order that you might lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light (14:1)

The Holy Quran is a Book which has been sent to bring mankind from darkness to light, to show the straight path to those astray, and to reconnect the disconnected to Allah ﷻ¹. This is a Book of guidance for mankind, a spring bringing life to the world. The Holy Quran is the Word of Allah ﷻ, and the word of kings is lord over all speeches and messages.

This is a fantastic Book. Reading it, touching it, listening to it, teaching it, understanding it, and above all, acting upon this Book all falls under worship. The Holy Quran is a magnet that pulls the mercy of Allah ﷻ toward itself and those around it like a magnet attracts iron toward itself. Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

When the Quran is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace that you may receive mercy (7:204)

Allah's ﷻ blessings descend upon that gathering in which the Holy Quran is being read or taught.

Miracle of the Holy Quran

Our glass has to be facing upward if we are to receive the blessings and guidance of Allah ﷻ. If our glass is turned upside down, and hence does not receive Allah's ﷻ guidance and blessings, then this is not the fault of those blessings but our own fault, because our glass is not facing the right way.

This is a Message for any that has a heart and understanding or who gives ear and earnestly witnesses [the truth] (50:37)

This means that this Holy Quran is for those whose hearts are attuned and those that are filled with desire. Such are the hearts which receive the blessings of Allah ﷻ.

¹ ﷻ literally means "Glorious and Exalted is He" and is mentioned after the Name of Allah ﷻ.

There is no book in existence whose followers have committed it to memory, as do the *huffaz*² of the Holy Quran. One of the glories of the Holy Quran is that Allah ﷻ has made its memorization easy for the Muslims. Also, there is no other book that is read as beautifully as the Holy Quran, with varying intonations. This is not any miracle of the readers, but a miracle of that Book whose reading has been made to vary in such ways. If this was a miracle of the readers, then it was be just as easy for them to memorize and read any book in this manner. Hence we find that this tonal reading is not a miracle of the readers, but a miracle of the Holy Quran.

There was a time when this Holy Book was read throughout Madinah; the streets of Madinah used to hum at Tahajjud time with the reading of the Holy Quran. Today our streets are as silent as a graveyard at night. We will stay busy until two o'clock in the morning in useless pursuits and be fast asleep when the time comes to ask from our Creator.

Some Examples of Excellence

A Noble Companion (*Sahabi*) was reading the Glorious Quran at night and next to him was a sleeping baby in a cot and next to the cot was his horse tied to a tree. The *Sahabi* would start reading loudly with pleasure but then quieten his reading for fear that the horse would become agitated and injure the child. The whole night passed in this way, and after he prayed tahajjud he saw a strange sight; lights were ascending into the sky. After praying the *Fajr* prayer he told the Messenger of Allah ﷺ³ what he had seen, and the Prophet ﷺ informed him that these had been angels who had descended to listen to his recital of the Holy Quran. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ further explained that the whole of Madinah would have seen angels with its own eyes if he had read the Holy Quran out loud. These were truly miraculous people who read the Holy Quran on the earth and the angels would descend from Allah's ﷻ Throne to listen.

Hadrat Ibn Ka'ab ؓ⁴ was a *Sahabi* who held a high rank among the *Sahabah* as a teacher. One day he was reading the Holy Quran and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed. Hadrat Ibn Ka'ab ؓ fell silent upon seeing him, but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told him to keep reading. Hadrat Ibn Ka'ab ؓ said, "How can I read in front of the one upon whom this Quran was revealed?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "This is so, but this is how I have been commanded."

Hadrat Ibn Ka'ab ؓ realized that Allah ﷻ Himself had issued a command. He asked, "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, did Allah ﷻ specify me by name?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "Yes, Allah ﷻ inspired me to tell you to read so that He may listen." These were the people who would read the Holy Quran with such love and sincerity that Allah ﷻ Himself would request them to read the Holy Quran.

² *Huffaz* is the plural of *hafiz*, someone who has committed the Holy Quran to memory.

³ ؓ literally means "may Allah bless him and grant him peace" and is mentioned after the name of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

⁴ ؓ literally means "may Allah be pleased with him" and is mentioned after the name of a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ.

Hadrat Fatima رضي الله عنها would become so absorbed in her reading of the Holy Quran and read with such desire that the whole night would pass unawares. Upon noticing the dawn, she would raise her hands and complain to Allah ﷻ, “O Allah ﷻ, I made intention for just two *rakats*⁵, and Your whole night passed away.” These were people who would complain that nights were too short for worship.

Savoring the Holy Quran

Returning from an engagement with the enemy, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ set up camp along the way and ordered two *Sahabah* to keep watch during the night while the rest of the army slept. The two *Sahabah* divided the night into shifts, and one would keep watch while the other slept; this way they would both could get equal sleep. The *Sahabi* who opted to stay awake for the first part of the night decided to stand up and offer prayer, and in the prayer he started reciting *Surah al-Kahf*⁶.

Enemy scouts approached and saw that the Muslim camp was asleep. Scanning the surrounding hills, they noticed a lone figure standing atop a cliff edge. They shot an arrow that struck the *Sahabi* in the chest, and he started bleeding. However, the *Sahabi* did not move from his position. Two more arrows hit him in the chest, but he kept reciting. When a fourth arrow struck him, he awoke his companion because of fear that he might lose consciousness.

According to some different sources of this hadith, the *Sahabi's* streaming blood fell upon his companion's face and thus he awoke. This *Sahabi* said to his now awakened companion, “Had I not had to wake you for the safety of the others, I would have taken arrow after arrow but would not have interrupted *Surah al-Kahf* for the pleasure it was bringing me.”

These were people whose reading would not be interrupted by an onslaught of arrows. Today a mere fly or mosquito distracts us so much that we not only ruin our recital but also distract others. They were true lovers of the Glorious Quran and wanted to keep reading.

Today we enjoy each scoop of ice cream and savor it, and these people savored every verse of the Holy Quran in the same way. Allah ﷻ tells us that tears would stream from their eyes as they read the Holy Quran. This was the quality of their reading and listening. When such people raise their hands and ask from Allah ﷻ, the Holy Quran says that Allah ﷻ grants their every wish.

A Book of Love

No book has been loved so much or will be loved as much as the Holy Quran. This is a Book that has been read in solitude, in gatherings, in the darkest of nights, and in the brightest of days. There is no such book on which people have cried so much, laughed so much, struggled so much to teach and understand, or struggled so much to commit it to memory. The lovers of the Holy Quran have spent their whole lives studying this Book, and have said that they would have kept studying and loving it even if they had been given the

⁵ A *rakat* is one cycle of prayer, that includes one incident of standing and two prostrations.

⁶ *Surah al-Kahf* is the 18th chapter of the Holy Quran.

long life of Hadrat Nuh ؑ⁷, who lived more than nine hundred years. No other book can compare to the Holy Quran, which claims so many lovers.

Some Contemporary Examples

Lest some people present the excuse that these are anecdotes of Sahabah, and we today cannot copy the examples of such exemplary people, let's examine some other examples.

In 1987, *Qari*⁸ Abdul Basit was visiting America, the same *Qari* Abdul Basit whose cassettes of the Holy Quran have become famous. Someone asked him once if he had seen a miracle of the Holy Quran, to which *Qari* Abdul Basit said, "Just one miracle? I can relate thousands which I have seen with my own eyes." The man asked him to relate some, so *Qari* Abdul Basit started talking.

Qari Abdul Basit related an event from the time of Jamal Abdul Nasser, who was once the president of Egypt. Communism was at its height, and once while on tour of the Soviet Union, Nasser was pressured heavily to become a communist and thus spread the doctrine in his country. He was promised that the Soviet Union would make Egypt a technological giant if only Nasser would renounce Islam and introduce Communism as the state religion. Abdul Nasser politely refused and thus ended this particular tour. He reached home but was restless that he had not defended Islam as sufficiently as he should have because he was not knowledgeable enough.

Abdul Nasser was invited to the Soviet Union again after a few years, and so this time he requested *Qari* Abdul Basit to come to Moscow with him. Abdul Basit was surprised because he had never imagined that he would ever be required in the Soviet Union, a land whose government and people refused to acknowledge Allah ﷻ.

On this occasion Jamal Abdul Nasser courageously introduced *Qari* Abdul Basit to the Soviet heads of state, telling them that he would recite the Holy Quran, the Book of Islam. *Qari* Abdul Basit closed his eyes and started reciting *Surah Ta Ha*, the same part of the Holy Quran that had made one of the worst enemies of Islam, Hadrat Umar ibn Khattab ؓ, bow to Islam.

Qari Abdul Basit opened his eyes and looked up after reciting two *rukus*⁹, and he saw the miracle of the Holy Quran in front of his eyes. Four to five heads of the Communist Party were in tears. Jamal Abdul Nasser smiled and asked, "Why are you crying?" to which one of the replied, "We don't know. We haven't understood a word but there is something in this Quran that has melted our hearts and compelled us to cry. We don't know what has done this."

Qari Abdul Basit said that this was an amazing miracle that he saw in front of him. These were people who did not know the Glorious Quran; did not accept the Glorious Quran, and who could not understand the Glorious Quran, yet Allah ﷻ was affecting their hearts

⁷ ؑ literally means "may Allah grant him peace" and is mentioned after the names of Prophets and Messengers.

⁸ A *qari* is a trained reciter of the Holy Quran.

⁹ A *ruku* is a section within a *surah*.

through the recital of the Glorious Quran. Hadrat Imam Ghulam Habib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ¹⁰ used to say that no one makes routes for rivers; rivers make their own routes and ways. The Holy Quran is such a Book that winds its own route of mercy through to the hearts of people, which is why the unbelievers of Makkah and Madinah accepted Islam upon hearing it. This is why the unbelievers used to confer among themselves and advise each other to shout and make noise whenever the Holy Quran would be read, so that they would not be affected.

However, the Holy Quran was sent to win over hearts, and Allah ﷻ accepts those who live their lives by it. We should try and read the Holy Quran often and act according to its instructions so that Allah ﷻ makes us successful both in this world and the Hereafter.

Our righteous predecessors received blessings because of their closeness to the Holy Quran. This was the Message that shook Arabia, and wherever the *Sahabah* turned with this Book, the world was compelled to bow. Those camel and shepherders who refused to bow to Caesar of Rome became people who changed the destiny of the world. How? They used to *act* upon the Holy Quran, unlike people who *don't* act upon it now. They were true lovers of this Glorious Quran, reading softly or loudly, sometimes crying.

This Book has been sent to enlighten hearts, and if even today people read it with love, Allah ﷻ will shower blessings upon them. This is a Book of guidance, sent to bring mankind out of darkness and into light. The lovers of the Glorious Quran receive the honor of both this world and the next, like the heights that Allah ﷻ had awarded the *Sahabah*.

Preserved in Progeny

A man in Lahore, Pakistan was an intense lover of the Holy Quran and was daily involved in recitation. Someone told him that Allah ﷻ would preserve the light of the Holy Quran in his progeny if he were to complete one reading of the Holy Quran every day for the next two years. This idea appealed to the man and so he took this challenge.

Day and night, in sickness or in health, at home or at work, in all sorts of weather and family situations, by the Grace of Allah ﷻ this man completed one reading of the Holy Quran every day for the next two years. What was the fruit of his labor? All of his sons and all of his daughters are *huffaz-e-Quran*. All the grandsons and granddaughters that have been born so far and are still alive today are also *huffaz*.

Raised in Honor

Hadrat Umar رضی اللہ عنہ was leading an army back to Madinah after an expedition when he stopped at a valley in the height of noonday. He dismounted and appeared lost in thought for a very long time. The soldiers starting sweating, but dared not move for their leader appeared to be contemplating something in the valley.

Someone worked up the courage to ask Hadrat Umar رضی اللہ عنہ what he was doing, since the army behind him was waiting. Hadrat Umar رضی اللہ عنہ sighed and said, “There was a time before accepting Islam that I used to herd camels in this very valley. I did not know how to herd them properly. My father used to beat me and say that I wouldn't amount to anything because I don't even know how to herd camels. Now Allah ﷻ has made Umar the *Amir-e-*

¹⁰ رحمۃ اللہ علیہ stands for “may the mercy of Allah be upon him” and is mentioned after the name of a deceased religious scholar.

Mumineen through the glory of Islam and the Holy Quran.” Hadrat Umar رضي الله عنه used to say, “The Holy Quran has come to give us honor.”

Indeed this Glorious Quran has come to bestow honor. We should learn and memorize this Book and apply it to our daily lives. We should pray that Allah ﷻ open our hearts with this Quran and give us the ability to learn this Book.

These are examples of the lovers of the Holy Quran around us today, and this is how Allah ﷻ preserves the Holy Quran through the generations of lovers. *We* also have a connection with this Book that we need to strengthen.

Acting upon the Holy Quran

A *hadith* says that Allah ﷻ will present the Holy Quran in the form of a young man on the Day of Judgment, who will intercede for its readers. This young man will say of its readers, “I was a guest in their houses and they paid proper attention to me. They read and understood me.” Allah ﷻ will accept the Holy Quran’s intercession on that Day and send its lovers into Paradise without account.

We need to establish a connection with this Glorious Quran, and read it constantly so that we become lovers of this Holy Book. We need to enlighten our hearts with the light of this Glorious Book and then we will be successful both in this life and the next.

The Holy Quran has been sent to give us victory in this life. The world runs after the *hafiz*, the *aalim*, and the *qari*, and Allah ﷻ awards them high status in this world and in the next. This Glorious Quran is a Book of honor and dignity, and whoever acts upon its teachings becomes a walking and breathing Quran.

Someone asked Hadrat Aisha رضي الله عنها about the character of the Prophet ﷺ, to which she answered, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was a walking and breathing example of the Noble Quran. If anyone wanted to see a personification of the Holy Quran, he should have looked upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.” In this same way Allah ﷻ showers blessings wherever such a person steps and wherever he may look.

A *hadith* tells us that Hadrat Abu Bakr Siddiq رضي الله عنه took two and a half years to complete *Surah al-Baqarah*. Why this long when his mother tongue was Arabic and he had no trouble understanding? Not only he but all the *Sahabah* would take this long or longer because their action would be according to the revelation, meaning that they would not proceed to the next verse until they had fully acted sincerely upon the previous. These people were living examples of the Holy Quran.

A guest came to Hadrat Husain’s رضي الله عنه house, so he sent his slave girl out for some food, because there was limited supply in the house. Upon reentering the house, she tripped and hot gravy burned through Hadrat Husain’s رضي الله عنه clothing. Hadrat Husain رضي الله عنه grew intensely angry and glared at the girl. However scared the slave girl became at seeing this in her master, she knew his character and the strong principles by which he lived.

The frightened girl immediately quoted a verse from the Noble Quran:

(The believers are) those... who restrain anger (3:134)

Hadrat Husain's ﷺ expression changed and he said to her, "I have absorbed my anger." The girl continued:

And pardon all men (3:134)

Hadrat Husain ﷺ said, "I forgive you for your mistake." The slave girl then said:

Allah loves those who do good (3:134)

Hadrat Husain ﷺ then replied, "Go, I have freed you for the sake of Allah ﷻ."

These were people who used to change their lives while listening to the Holy Quran. One moment Hadrat Husain ﷺ was glaring at his slave girl in anger, and the next moment he freed her for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

Our Disease and its Cure

Today our copies of the Glorious Quran are sitting on shelves in silk coverings but we do not find the time to read them. We waste our time in useless television and drama shows. We watch television and read the newspaper for hours without realizing the time, and months go by like this, but nobody has the time to pick up the Glorious Revelation of Allah ﷻ. People remember this Divine Book when a mother has to give a dowry to her daughter, or when we need to swear an oath. We as Muslims need to remember this Book in our daily lives: for our household, our business, and our daily chores.

Call to mind when you were a small band, despised through the land, and afraid that men might despoil and kidnap you; but He provided a safe asylum for you, and strengthened you with His aid (8:26)

Allah ﷻ gave victory to the *Sahabah* because of this Holy Book. The unbelievers made intricate plans to try and root out Islam, but Allah ﷻ had sent His Messenger ﷺ with a Message that was to spread over the whole world. Therefore, this Holy Book proved victorious. Allah ﷻ says in the Blessed Quran:

Their intention is to extinguish Allah's Light (by blowing) with their mouths, but Allah will complete (the revelation of) His Light, even though the Unbelievers may detest it (61:8)

Likewise, the unbelievers used to make intricate plans to kill the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

Those before them did also plot (against Allah's Way), but Allah took their structures from their foundations, and the roof fell down on them from above (16:26)

The Glorious Quran grants victory to the believers. The reason that we are not victorious today and are being herded and killed like cattle is because of a fault in our faith (*iman*). Allah ﷻ wants to grant the believers victory, but our faith is lacking. When the Holy Quran was completed, Allah ﷻ said:

This day have those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion; yet fear them not but fear Me (5:3)

As long as the believers had fear of Allah ﷻ in their hearts they were pieces of iron that nothing could break. Allah ﷻ says:

How oft, by Allah's Will, has a small force vanquished a big one? Allah is with those who steadfastly persevere (2:249)

Allah ﷻ will help us when we develop fear in our hearts and become true followers and lovers of the Holy Quran.

If today we see the unbelievers strong and in large numbers, we need not worry. All we need to do is become true lovers and followers of the Holy Quran and Allah ﷻ will send the help of Badr. Allah ﷻ has sworn to help the Prophets and those who have faith.

The Muslims were surrounded from all sides at the Battle of the Ditch, and the unbelievers were confident that they would erase Islam, but they could not accomplish anything the entire month of the siege.

Today the unbelievers are doing the same thing that they did in the past, and all we need to do attach this Divine Book to our hearts and act upon it. Allah ﷻ has sworn victory for the believers, but we need to become lovers and readers of this Noble Book, and most of all we need to apply this Holy Quran in our lives. Only then will we be victorious.

Hadrat Imam Ghulam Habib ؒ used to say, "How can it be that you have the Holy Quran in one hand and you remain a slave?" Our hearts are diseased, but we only need to open the Book of Allah ﷻ to find the cure. We are patients, and we have the cure in our midst, but we fail to apply it. The Glorious Quran is a cleanser that we need to apply to our hearts. This Glorious Book has to descend past the tongue to our hearts, and only then will it enlighten and enliven the heart.

May Allah ﷻ make us lovers of the Holy Quran, writers of the Holy Quran, *huffaz* of the Holy Quran, and actors upon the Holy Quran. May Allah ﷻ spread the light of the Glorious Quran throughout the world and enlighten our hearts with it.

